

Jack Stafford

CHSSA HALL OF FAME 1991



Born in Oxnard, California, Jack feels that “my close encounter with self-actualization came with my emerging myself in speech communication education.” A graduate of Oxnard High School in 1959, Jack did not know until he graduated from college that his high school had a speech team. His interests in high school were right out of American Graffiti. At San Jose City College he took his first speech class. He says that an “A” in that class led him to first minor, and then major in speech at San Jose State. In 1965 he graduated from San Jose State with a major in Speech and Social Studies. He also did his graduate work at San Jose State.

His first teaching job was at Del Norte High School in 1966, because they offered him speech classes to teach. For two years he taught required speech classes to sophomores. In 1968 the elective speech coach, Glades Hue, asked him to take over. He had never competed in forensics. He had only been to one tournament that was required in the graduate year at San Jose State. He accepted the position and became consumed for the next thirty years in high school competitive speech and debate.

He indicates, “My association with students and coaching peers became the most rewarding aspect of my career.” His best friend, Mike Mealue, is one of his first competitors who became a speech major and teacher at Del Norte, coaching the team for five years after Jack retired. Andy Morse competed at two national tournaments in L.D. and extemp and is now a college professor in the mid-west and always stays in touch. Rene’ Shanle, a state competitor is now a west coast radio executive who will be a life long friend. Jeremy Mullen is a law professor at Georgetown and Shannon Finley is an advocate for Native Americans in Washington D.C. He is proud of the many accomplishments of his former students.

Jack held several offices in CHSSA: From area I representative at large to president. “To work with individuals from the speech discipline has been a joy. They are the best group with which I have ever dealt. Sharing time with my colleagues on the state speech council was invigorating. I learned so much. Carmendale Fernandes taught me that forensics was the lab for speech education. David Dansky taught me that you teach a student to give a good speech and the winning will take care of itself. I learned more about operating a tournament from Donovan Cummings than I thought possible. The coaches in the Redwood Speech League, Golden Gate Speech Association and the Sacramento Valley League were inspiring.”

Since “retiring”, Jack has taught speech part-time at the College of the Redwoods. He also teaches public speaking, group discussion, mass media, Parliamentary and interpersonal communication. In 2003 he was voted Associate Teacher of the year. “Teaching speech is like teaching life itself. I have no plans to retire.”

Sadly, Jack passed away in February of 2009.

